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## Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MAZIE K. HIRONO, a Senator from the State of Hawaii.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Gracious God of infinite goodness, confirm Your past mercies to us by giving us strength to be faithful to Your commands.

Lord, help our lawmakers this day to use their understanding, time, and talents to do what You desire. May they desire to please You with faithful service as You rule their hearts and guide their thoughts, words, and actions. Lord, enable our Senators to fulfill their duty to love You with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength. Take possession of their hearts and order their steps by the power of Your loving providence.

We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,

Washington, DC, Monday, July 19, 2021.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable MAZIE K. HIRONO, a Senator from the State of Hawaii, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,  
President pro tempore.

Ms. HIRONO thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

### MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

### THE ECONOMY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, runaway costs and surging inflation are a huge worry for middle-class families. Every survey confirms it. Every conversation confirms it.

Over the last 12 months, during this economic recovery, the average American worker earned a 3.6-percent raise, but inflation has risen so steeply that it has turned that into a nearly 2-percent pay cut.

Remember, at the beginning of the year, the Biden administration inherited a historically strong economic trajectory. Thanks to the smart, targeted, bipartisan policies we passed last year, our economy was primed to get millions of Americans back to work with competitive pay while consumers unleashed pent-up demand. But, alas,

that was before Democrats decided to pour \$2 trillion into a long list of liberal pet projects and insisted on making it less appealing for workers to actually go back to work.

Today, essentials like gas and groceries have gotten more and more expensive. Bigger purchases consumers had put off during the pandemic are getting even further out of reach. Across the country, working families and employers alike are feeling the pinch, an effective tax increase on both the wages and the savings of the middle class.

Now, our colleagues weren't flying blind. They weren't naive. They knew they were passing what the White House Chief of Staff said was designed to be "the most progressive domestic legislation in a generation." And they knew the risks, which one liberal economist described as "inflationary pressures of a kind we have not seen in a generation."

Sure enough, inflation just clocked the fastest year-on-year increase since 2008, but, apparently, according to President Biden himself, the solution is—listen to this—even more of the same. Today, instead of deflecting attention from the fact that his administration's springtime approach was flat wrong, the President actually doubled down. He suggested the right way to shake this inflation was—listen to this—another \$3.5 trillion in spending.

This is the same reckless taxing and spending spree the Democrats dreamt up when they assumed our economy would be having the opposite problem. But now all that same borrowing, printing, and spending is supposed to be what the doctor ordered to fight inflation?

Inflate our way out of inflation. Let's hope the American people don't have to learn firsthand how that strategy would work out. Another multitrillion-dollar reckless taxing and spending spree, believe me, is the last thing American families need.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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## ELECTION LAWS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, now on an entirely different matter, a few months ago, a group of Democrats and leftwing activists brought the State of Georgia into the national spotlight. Tremendous outrage, an air of total crisis, was cooked up, cooked up out of nowhere.

The State of Georgia was passing a mainstream, commonsense election law. It combined widely popular integrity protections, protections like voter ID, with a great deal of flexibility and availability to make voting easy. It codified more flexible early voting and more flexible mail-in voting than many Democratic-run States offer—for example, New York.

Americans want to make it easier to vote and harder to cheat. Voter ID, for example, is popular with majorities of Black, White, and Hispanic Americans. But in their ongoing bid to mount a Washington DC takeover of our Nation's elections, Democrats seized on this mainstream law and decided to start shouting that the sky was falling down in Georgia—the sky is falling down in Georgia.

Unfortunately, for the people of Georgia, many people in the press and corporate America bought it. They got Major League Baseball to move its all-star game out of Georgia. Actual work opportunities, actual prosperity for working people, were sacrificed to serve this faked hysteria.

Well, today, Georgians got what you might call a very weak consolation prize. Today, a week after the all-star game was supposed to happen in Atlanta, Democrats themselves descended on the State to stage a bit of partisan theater. Last week, the traveling road show was Texas Democrats coming here to Washington to beg Senate Democrats to seize power away from their own citizens and local governments.

This week, it was our own colleagues' turn to get on the jets, but the rhetoric was just as hysterical and the conclusion all the same: Washington Democrats need to grab unprecedented power and rewrite all 50 States' election laws. It is the same shtick we have been hearing here in this Chamber for multiple years now.

Remember, their sweeping takeover bill was written long, long before any of the State laws which they now claim are prompting it. This phony outrage is wearing thin on the American people. Citizens know it isn't attacking democracy to have things like commonsense voter ID and commonsense voter list maintenance alongside lots of early voting, lots of mail-in voting, and lots of election-day voting.

That kind of combination isn't an attack on democracy; it is the definition of democracy. It is exactly what Americans want.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

## VOTING RIGHTS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, in response to the minority leader's statement about the changes in voting laws across America, the record speaks for itself. I believe the number is 17—17 States which have set out to specifically limit previous opportunities under law to vote.

Is it a coincidence that 17 States would do these things? I don't think so. I think it is by design. That is why the Senate Rules Committee was in Georgia today, to talk specifically about the measures that they took after the last election.

Remember, this is all being done in the context of a former President, the sorest loser in the history of the United States, and his Big Lie about what was wrong with the last election. Well, I can tell you what was not wrong with the last election. In many States, the turnout broke records. More Americans eligible to vote turned up to vote, and that is a good thing in a democracy.

When it comes to allegations of fraud, all of the money that has been spent on lawsuits, all of the allegations of voter fraud that have been investigated, it turns out to be a handful of cases, maybe a dozen out of millions of votes cast in the United States. So there is no argument for changing election voting laws based on fraud. There certainly is no argument when it comes to the outcome of the election. That was clear, and it has been to everyone except one former President for a long time. Yet the Republicans, when in control of State legislatures, are by design trying to make it more difficult for some people to vote. Why? The answer is very simple: The demographics of America are not on the side of the Republican Party.

The new voters in this country are moving away from them, away from Donald Trump, away from their party creed that they preach. Instead, they are moving to be Independents or even vote on the other side. To argue and fight against that, the Republicans in legislative settings are reducing and restricting the opportunity to vote. That is what it is all about.

The Senator from Kentucky attributes it to hysteria. It is not. It is a genuine concern over whether in this country, where democracy is our creed and our goal in every election, we have the most participation, fair participation, by eligible voters that we have ever had, and we continue to build on that.

## DREAM ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, on a separate issue, I cannot imagine what life would be like if I were a kid growing up in America, always wondering if something I said, something I did, some action that was taken by some member of my family would result in a knock on the door and my family being

torn apart, my father or mother being deported to another country. But for hundreds of thousands of young people living in America, that has been the reality of their childhood.

Most of them, brought to this country at a very early age—infants and toddlers and young people—had nothing to say about the choice of America as home, but they always assumed it was their home. They grew up in this country, went to the schools, got up every morning in the classroom and pledged allegiance to the flag, believing they were truly Americans. It wasn't, for many of them, until their teenage years that their parents sat down with them very quietly and solemnly told them: You have a challenge in your life you didn't even realize. You are undocumented. You were brought to this country by us as a little kid, and you don't have any papers. If you are challenged, if you are arrested, you could be deported. And the same thing might just happen to your mother or your father.

I can't imagine, with all of the stress of childhood and adolescence, having that worry as well. Yet, for hundreds of thousands of young people, through no fault of their own, that was part of their lives.

That came to my attention 20 years ago, a case in Chicago, which I have spoken about on the floor many times, where a young girl finally realized at the end of high school the really stark choices she had in her life, and she reached out to my office. We looked into the situation. She was brought here to the United States, born in Brazil to Korean parents, had no legal status in the United States and grew up here. She wanted to know what to do with her life, what was next for her.

The law was very harsh, but it was clear as well. At the age of 18, our law said to Tereza Lee, a young Korean girl in Chicago, you have to leave the United States for 10 years and petition to return. It didn't seem right or fair or just to her, and so I introduced the DREAM Act. That is when I came to realize Tereza's story was not unique. There were thousands just like her. Over the last 20 years, I have met a lot of them, an amazing group of young men and women who have done remarkable things with their lives with limited resources and always under the shadow of deportation.

The DREAM Act has been brought to the floor of the Senate five different times and failed—not because it didn't win a majority but because of the filibuster. So we have tried in those 20 years to get something done, and we have had our really troublesome moments. I think back to one of the worst.

Under the previous President, Donald Trump, DACA, a program created by President Obama for these Dreamers, was really an issue from the start that we begged President Trump to consider. President Obama, a friend of mine and former colleague from Illinois, told me that he spent an extra